GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:244
ANSWERED ON:15.03.2016
Diversion of Forest Land
Majhi Shri Balabhadra

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

(a) whether diversion of forest land in urban areas for developmental works requires prior approval of the Union Government;
(b) if so, the details thereof along with the number of such proposals received from various States during each of the last three years and the current year, State/UT-wise, including Odisha;
(c) the number of such proposals approved, rejected, pending or under consideration along with the reasons for rejection/pendency and the time by which the pending proposals are likely to be approved, State-wise; and
(d) whether the Government proposes to relax the Forest (Conservation) Act with respect to diversion of forest land in urban areas and if so, the details and present status thereof?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

(SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR)

(a)to (d)A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

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STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (d) OF THE LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 244 ASKED BY SHRI BALABHADRA MAJHI REGARDING 'DIVERSION OF FOREST LAND DUE FOR REPLY ON 15.03.2016.

(a)Yes, Sir.

(b)& (c) Forest land in urban areas are diverted for development works for providing essential services such as Schools, Drinking water supply, Dispensaries & Hospitals etc.
During the last three years and current year, the Central Government has received 81 proposals of development projects in urban areas including from Odisha. 64 proposals were accorded approval and 17 proposals are pending. State-wise details of approvals accorded by the Central Government for use of the forest land for such activities is given at Annexure-I. Grant of approvals by the Central Government under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 is a continuing process. Quite often, proposals or compliance of Stage-I approvals, received from the State/UT Governments area not complete in all respects and the Central Government has to seek further details/documents from the concerned State/UT Governments. Since most of these proposals involves less than 40 ha land, hence, these proposals are mainly disposed at the Regional Offices of MoEF&CC. There are no delay in granting approval under Forest (Conservation) Act. The Ministry takes prompt decision, when proposals complete in all respects, are submitted by the State/UT Governments.

(d) Further, there is no proposal for relaxation of provisions of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 in urban areas.
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